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15 March 1984

MEMORANDUM FOR: Chairman, National Intelligence Council

VIA : Vice Chairman, National Intelligence Council

FROM : David Y. McManis  
National Intelligence Officer for Warning

SUBJECT : A View of the Iraq/Iran War

1. We have been carefully watching the coverage of the Iraq/Iran War and perceive that there may be a bias toward things Iranian. Some examples may be appropriate.

a. Most articles are framed from the perspective of what Iran has done and will do. Treatment of Iraq seems based on their response to Iranian actions. This may be the result of two factors; first, our past close association with Iran that included political, military training and equipment, and economic arrangements. This relationship may cause us to mirror-image from a "western" point of view. Secondly, our past relations with Iraq tend to have an opposite effect despite our policy changes toward the Middle East.

b. In the face of consistent heavy losses on the part of Iran, Iraq's basic defensive strategy seems to be considered critically. Iraq's rather limited use of air power is consistently viewed from a western bias and always critically. Iran's similar limited use of tactical air is seldom highlighted although their capabilities are less, their results equally poor and probably less effective.

c. Of late, items have highlighted results of potential Iranian victories and Iranian tenacity in bringing down the Iraqi regime. Iraqi economic problems may also be magnified disproportionately.

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2. The bottom line is that if we are correct in this judgment then we are handicapping our ability to assess the situation and may systematically ask the wrong or incomplete questions.



David Y. McManis

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